

Minutes from DD Ad hoc Committee Meeting August 17, 2016

In attendance: Committee members Rita Hopkins, Peggy Reyna, Lourdes Caracoza, John James, Ed Colley, Allan Buck and Steve Miller. Visiting Commission members Carlos Benvinades, John Troost, and Wan-Chun Chang. LA County Human Resources Department representatives: Carla Williams and Penelope Torres. Guest Rebecca Lienhard

1. New employment initiatives included in California's State

The Committee heard a presentation from Rebecca Lienhard, Chief Executive Officer of the Tierra del Sol Foundation, on new funding programs to assist people with developmental disabilities to enter the workforce. Ms. Lienhard described new State funding available to private and public sector employers to bring interns with qualifying developmental disabilities to work and learn in their places of employment. The State also increased funding for job development and on the job support services for people with developmental disabilities.

These programs offer important new opportunities and tools for public sector employers such as the County of Los Angeles to include within its diverse workforce appropriately qualified men and women with developmental disabilities.

2. Overview of Workforce Incentives Opportunities Act

The Committee heard a presentation by Commissioner Wan-Chun Chang: The State is coordinating the efforts of the Departments of Rehabilitation, Developmental Services and Employment Development (EDD) to improve the unemployment rate of between 70 and 80% among people with developmental disabilities. New Federal and State regulations will create incentives to provide enhanced job training and placement services for young people with developmental disabilities during high school and in the first few years after high school.

3. Next steps for Collaboration with LA County Human Resources Department

Penelope Torres and Carla Williams reported on the activities of the County HR Department since our last meeting: Carla and Penelope visited a local employer and job support agency who participate in hiring and training people with developmental disabilities. They reported being very impressed with the program.

Ms. Williams also reported on her participation at a meeting at LA Valley College concerning that College's very successful college-to-career internship program for students with developmental disabilities.

As a result of these visits and the very positive working relationship established with the Committee, the HR Department is moving forward with their plans to

include people with disabilities within their under-represented target populations. This designation will lead to the inclusion of people with disabilities within the County's CAREER PATHFINDERS, "BRIDGES Program" . It is now possible that the County may launch an Internship program for people with developmental disabilities similar to the programs they offer Veterans and recently-emancipated minors. This would be a very positive development.

The Committee was very appreciative of the HR Department's active efforts to include County residents with developmental disabilities within their workforce.

Commissioner Hopkins suggested that, since our Ad hoc Committee is focused on the needs of County residents with developmental disabilities, that we should make sure that we all have a clear and comprehensive understanding of what constitutes a developmental disability. Commissioner Miller agreed to find and send out a well-accepted definition of developmental disability for the Commission's discussion at our next meeting.

Committee members discussed these and a variety of additional ideas. Commissioner Buck suggested that the County should adopt one or more job classifications that specifically exempt applicants from exams and other pre employment requirements that effectively "weed out" applicants with disabilities. Commissioner Buck indicated that the City of Los Angeles has had such job classifications for many years. He said they allow people with disabilities who could do the job successfully to avoid the exams and other prerequisites that prevent them from having the chance to show what they can do on the job. The Committee asked Commissioner Buck if he could find an example of the City Job Classification for our review.